

Message Text

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USIA-15 OPIC-06 OES-05 HEW-06 SP-02 NSC-05 CIEP-02

SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-01

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TAGS: OCON, ESCAP, EIND, EAGR

SUBJECT: ESCAP: INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC AREAS OF COOPERATION IN FIELDS OF AGRO AND ALLIED INDUSTRIES, 24-28 FEB 76, BANGKOK

1. SUMMARY: MEETING AGAIN PROVED THAT VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF ESCAP MEETINGS VARIES INVERSELY WITH LENGTH OF MEETING'S TITLE. THIS FOUR AND HALF DAY MEETING WAS MERELY A FOLLOW UP TO LAST SEPTEMBER'S INDUSTRY, HOUSING AND TECHNOLOGY (IHT) COMMITTEE MEETING AND THEREFORE QUITE UNNECESSARY. PROJECT FOR ASIAN CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY (LAUNCHED YEARS AGO) IN FINANCIAL TROUBLE AND JAPAN SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING PULLING OUT AFTER ALREADY INVESTING OVER \$500 THOUSAND. STRONG REGIONAL INTEREST EXPRESSED IN BIOGOS DEVELOPMENT; USE OF WATER HYACINTH AS RAW MATERIAL FOR BIOGAS GENERATION MENTIONED IN ESCAP (BY UNIDO REP) FOR FIRST TIME. INFORMATION ON RESULTS OF BIOCONVERSION CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON DC WOULD THEREFORE BE APPRECIATED. END SUMMARY.

2. MEETING GOT OFF TO SLOW START AND CONTINUED TO BEGIN LATE AND END EARLY FOR LACK OF SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES TO DISCUSS. AFTER FIRST DAY ESCAP MEMBERS' ATTENTION SHIFTED TO LARGER TCDC REGIONAL MEETING IN ANOTHER HALL. ONLY ACTIVE

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PARTICIPANTS WERE FROM INDIA, BANGLADESH, THAILAND, JAPAN,

AND INDONESIA. UNIDO AND FAO REPRESENTATIVES CONSTANTLY COMPETED WITH EACH OTHER TO DESCRIBE ALL THE WONDERFUL PROJECTS THESE ORGANIZATIONS HAD UNDERTAKEN.

3. AGENDA ITEM 5, WHICH LISTED SEVEN IHT COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, OCCUPIED MOST OF THE TIME.

A. REGIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY. JAPAN HAS ALREADY INVESTED \$600 AND IS CONTEMPLATING AN ADDITIONAL \$300 THOUSAND BUT THREATENS TO WITHDRAW ITS SUPPORT IF FINAL PROJECT AGREEMENT NOT CONCLUDED IN MARCH. NAME OF PROJECT IS A PROBLEM PLUS FACT JAPANESE FISCAL YEAR BEGINS APRIL 1. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS WHETHER ESCAP SHOULD BE EXECUTING AGENCY FOR PROJECT. INDIA, IRAN AND KOREA HAVE ALSO MADE MODEST PLEDGES AND PHILIPPINES HAS OFFERED \$50,000 IN LAND AND INFRASTRUCTURE. MAJOR PROBLEM IS THAT UNDP HAS REDUCED ITS SHARE OF PROJECT FROM ITS ORIGINAL 50 TO 30 PERCENT. SOME ALSO ARGUED COST OF MACHINERY SHOULD COME OUT OF REGIONAL RATHER THAN NATIONAL IPFS (INDICATIVE PLANNING FIGURES). THIS ISSUE WILL CERTAINLY RETURN AGAIN AT ESCAP 32ND SESSION.

B. INTEGRATED POST HARVEST TECHNOLOGY. ALL AGREED MORE STUDIES UNNECESSARY. THAILAND'S DESCRIPTION OF SUCCESS IN CO-DEVELOPING WITH AIT (ASIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY) A RICE STORAGE BIN FOR \$125 LED TO ESCAP SECRETARIAL PROPOSAL TO STUDY POSSIBILITY OF WORKING JOINTLY WITH FAO TO EXCHANGE SIMILAR SUCCESS STORIES IN REGION.

C. CHEMICAL FERTILIZER REPORT. CONSULTANT SUMMARIZED REPORT WHICH WILL BE PRESENTED TO ESCAP 32ND SESSION. BANGLADESH WORRIED ABOUT FERTILIZER SURPLUS DEVELOPING IN 1980 WHEN REGIONAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES ALL GO "ON STREAM." INDIA IS TRAINING 150 BENGALI NITROGENOUS FERTILIZER ENGINEERS. THAILAND MENTIONED IT INTENDED TO EXPLOIT ITS POTASH DEPOSITS; LAOS SAID NOTHING ABOUT ITS OWN. INDIA AND PHILIPPINES INTEND TO COOPERATE ON PRODUCING SULPHURIC ACID FROM PYRITES IN CONNECTION WITH PHILIPPINE MINING OF PHOSPHATE ROCK. SYMPOSIUM ON PESTICIDES POSTPONED FOR LACK OF UNDP FUNDS.

D. EMPLOYMENT ORIENTED INDUSTRIES: SERICULTURE, ESSENTIAL
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OILS AND LEATHER. NOTHING REALLY NEW WAS MENTIONED; ESCAP SECRETARIAT IS STILL IN PROCESS OF MAKING STUDIES UNDER VARIOUS PROJECTS. INDONESIA ASKED TO INCLUDE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CANNING AS ANOTHER SECTOR FOR STUDY.

E. FOOD INDUSTRIES SUCH AS INTEGRATED DAIRY INDUSTRY. AS IF TO REINFORCE U.S. QUESTIONS RAISED AT LAST IHT COMMITTEE MEETING ABOUT VIABILITY OF HIGH COST DAIRY INDUSTRIES IN

REGION. BOTH INDIA AND THAILAND NOTED UNUSUAL COMPLICATIONS AND PROBLEMS DISCOVERED IN DOMESTIC PRODUCTION, PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF DAIRY PRODUCTS. IMPORTED ITEMS STILL CHEAPER AND ARE ALSO STILL CAUSING LARGE FOREIGN EXCHANGE DRAIN. THROUGH CLEVER MANEUVERING, BANGLADESH GOT INDIA TO AGREE TO ACCEPT BENGALI TRAINEES IN INDIAN STATE DAIRIES.

F. BIOGAS TECHNOLOGY. UNANIMOUS SUPPORT GIVEN TO CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF BIOGAS TECHNOLOGY IN REGION. NEOPRENE BAG DIGESTORS, ORIGINALLY DEVELOPED IN THE PRC, ARE BECOMING POPULAR. IN ADDITION TO INDIA, TONGA, FIJI, BURMA AND IRAN ARE DEVELOPING BIOGAS PLANTS, UNIDO NOTED WATER HYACINTH, A TROUBLESOME AQUATIC WEED COSTING MILLIONS TO ERADICATE, COULD BE USED AS BIOGAS RAW MATERIAL IN FERMENTATION PROCESS. SECRETARIAT WAS ASKED TO BEGIN ISSUANCE OF BIOGAS NEWSLETTER.

G. UTILIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL WASTES. ESCAP PROJECT TO STUDY WASTE UTILIZATION WAS GIVEN LOWER PRIORITY--FOR IMPLEMENTATION WHEN FUNDS AVAILABLE. UNIDO AGAIN TOOK THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE ANOTHER OF ITS CENTERS: INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR INDUSTRIAL STUDIES.

4. REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY NETWORK FOR AGRO-INDUSTRIES WAS DISCUSSED AGAIN BY ESCAP SECRETARIAT AS NEXT GOAL TO BE PURSUED AFTER ASIAN CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY IN PHILIPPINES AND REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CENTER IN INDIA HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED--CERTAINLY NOT IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

5. COMMENT: MANY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (INCLUDING U.S.) WHO ATTENDED THIS MEETING CONSIDER IT TO HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY. ALL ITEMS HAD BEEN RAISED SIX MONTHS EARLIER AT IHT COMMITTEE MEETING AND THUS IT WAS MERELY RECAPITULATION. UNCLASSIFIED

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LATION OF PROJECT STATUS REPORTS WHICH GAVE ESCAP SECRETARIAT ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO "PASS THE HAT." UK WAS ONLY ONE TO OFFER ADDITIONAL FUNDS--FOR RESEARCH ON DAIRY INDUSTRY. BIOGAS TECHNOLOGY CONTINUES TO STIMULATE INTEREST IN REGION. ANY INFORMATION WE CAN PROVIDE SECRETARIAT ON RESULTS OF CURRENT BIOCONVERSION CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON DC WOULD BE WELL APPRECIATED. WHITEHOUSE

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